Chapter 11

Lessons for the Practice and Analysis of EU Diplomacy from an 'Outside-in' Perspective

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Introduction[1]

Analysing the broader neighbourhood of the European Union (EU) poses significant challenges in terms of knowledge and understanding of this neighbourhood. Having a good knowledge of the EU's positions and policies towards these regions is not sufficient to detect the challenges Europe is facing in its broader neighbourhood, to evaluate the EU's strategies and frameworks of cooperation with the neighbours of the EU's neighbours, and to assess how further bridges can be built with these various countries and regions as well as with the EU's immediate neighbours covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

This chapter argues that, in order to achieve a genuine understanding of the EU's relationship with and policies towards its broader neighbourhood, it is essential to complement an EU-centred perspective with what is labelled in this chapter as an 'outside-in' perspective. An 'outside-in' perspective means that the analyst or practitioner (diplomat or civil servant) does not take the EU's policy towards a third country or region as the only point of reference, but also tries to look at this EU policy from the perspective of the third countries or regions concerned – in the context of this book the Gulf region, the Sahel region, the Horn of Africa, Central Asia and the Caspian Sea region.

The first section of this chapter provides possible explanations for the recurrent neglect of the 'outside' in the analysis of EU foreign policy. The following section offers several building blocks for adopting an 'outside-in' perspective and applies this on the EU's policy towards the neighbours of its neighbours. This will serve as a basis for the last section, which draws lessons from an 'outside-in' perspective for the various actors involved in EU foreign policy, including the High Representative, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the EU Delegations.

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1 Research on the 'outside-in' perspective in EU foreign policy has been conducted in the framework of the *TOTAL Chair of EU Foreign Policy* at the College of Europe in Bruges. I am grateful to the European and non-European researchers and practitioners who contributed to my learning process about the 'outside' as well as to Raphaël Metais and Charles Thépaut, former Research Assistants of the *TOTAL Chair of EU Foreign Policy*, for their input and critical comments.

The Neglect of the 'Outside'

One of the limitations of the academic analysis of EU foreign policy is that this research predominantly adopts an 'inward-looking' or 'inside-out' perspective, thereby focusing on the EU's foreign policy mechanisms and evaluating EU foreign policy from the perspective of the EU. Less scholarly attention is given to an 'outside-in' perspective in which the 'outside' (or the 'foreign' – see below) is taken as a major point of reference.[2] Such an 'outside-in' perspective implies that the foreign policy analysts examine foreign policy from the perspective and within the context of the region, country, society, elites or populations that are the subject, target, recipient, beneficiary or victim of the given foreign policy. Recent research that emphasizes the 'outside' includes academic work on external perceptions of the EU[3] and on the EU's democratization policy in the Mediterranean.[4]

Before providing building blocks to conceptualize the 'outside-in' perspective, this section looks at possible explanations for the neglect of the 'outside' by foreign policy analysts. In a variation on the statement of Tickner and Waever that 'the discipline of International Relations (IR) is ironically not "international" at all', it is argued in this chapter that the academic analysis of EU foreign policy and of foreign policy in general is often, ironically, not 'foreign' at all.[5] The presence of non-Western scholars and non-Western approaches in publications on EU foreign policy is rather limited. Analysts and scholars are often specialized in the EU's foreign policy towards a specific country or region, but are in many cases not at all specialized in the country, region or society that is the subject of the analysis. The analysis of foreign policy also suffers from the limited explanatory power of predominant Western perspectives and categories to analyse non-Western contexts.[6]

2 Cavatorta and Pace use the label 'inside-out' for what this chapter refers to as 'outside-in'. See Cavatorta, F. and Pace, M. 2010. Special Issue: The Post-Normative Turn in European Union (EU)-Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Relations. *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 15(5), 581–737.

3 See Chaban, N. and Holland, M. (eds) 2013. *Europe and Asia: Perceptions from Afar*. Baden-Baden: Nomos; Chaban, N., Holland, M. and Ryan, P. (eds) 2009. *The EU through the Eyes of Asia: New Cases, New Findings*. Singapore/London: World Scientific; Lucarelli, S. and Fioramonti, L. (eds) 2010. *External Perceptions of the European Union as a Global Actor*. Abingdon: Routledge.

4 See Mayer, H. and Zielonka, J. 2012. Special issue: Europe as a global power: views from the outside. *Perspectives*, 20(2), 1–128; Pace, M. and Seeberg, P. 2009. *The European Union's Democratization Agenda in the Mediterranean*. London: Routledge; and Youngs, R. (ed.) 2010. *The European Union and Democracy Promotion: A Critical Global Assessment*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

5 Tickner, A.B. and Waever, O. (eds) 2009. *International Relations Scholarship around the World*. London: Routledge.

6 Waever, O. 1994. Resisting the Temptation of Post Foreign Policy Analysis, in Carlsnaes, W. and Smith, S. (eds), *European Foreign Policy: The EC and Changing Perspectives in Europe*. London: Sage Publications, 11; and Tickner, A.B. 2003. Seeing

In their book on *Non-Western International Relations Theory*, Acharya and Buzan explain that, despite their variety, most IR theories are rooted in the Western tradition of social theory and in a Eurocentric framing of world history.[7] IR scholars therefore analyse foreign policy from a Western perspective – based on the Westphalian paradigm and modernization paradigms – and have major problems in overcoming Western ethnocentrism and accepting 'difference' in international relations.[8] In this regard, developing an 'outside-in' approach only makes sense if the ethnocentric bias of the Western perspective is acknowledged and is conceptually overcome. This implies that the existence of different modernization narratives is accepted and that the Western modernization process is seen as only one possible path, instead of taking it for granted and generalizing its applicability to the modernization processes of other parts of the world. The recognition of 'difference' thus implies recognition that other countries or societies can have 'alternative developmental schemas' and can be subject to different transformative mechanisms, processes and contexts.[9]

Constructing an 'Outside-in' Perspective

Constructing an 'outside-in' perspective implies the willingness and capacity to enter into a learning process in order to recognize and analyse 'difference'. In this section, some building blocks for adopting an 'outside-in' approach are proposed, including the geographical 'outside-in', polity 'outside-in', normative 'outside-in', linguistic 'outside-in', and disciplinary and methodological 'outside-in' perspectives.

Geographical 'Outside-in'

On the most basic level, an 'outside-in' approach implies, first, that the analysis and assessment of EU foreign policy starts from a thorough knowledge of the situation in the 'target countries', 'recipient countries', or 'partner countries' of the EU's foreign policy and, second, that this knowledge is constructed from the

IR Differently: Notes from the Third World. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 32(2), 295–324.

7 Acharya, A. and Buzan, B. 2010. *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and beyond Asia*. London: Routledge, 6.

8 Inayatullah, N. and Blaney, D.L. 2004. *International Relations and the Problem of Difference*. London: Routledge, 93–125; Chabal, P. and Daloz, J.-P. 2006. *Culture Troubles: Politics and the Interpretation of Meaning*. London: Hurst & Company; and Kayaoglu, T. 2010. Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theories. *International Studies Review*, 12(2), 193–217.

9 Delanty, G. and Rumford, C. 2005. *Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization*. Abingdon: Routledge, 15.

perspective of and taking into account their contexts (and not only that of the EU or the West). Regarding the subject of this book, the neighbours of the EU's neighbours, this implies that the analysis of the EU's policy towards its broader neighbourhood needs to start from a sound knowledge of the various regions (the Horn of Africa, the Sahel region, the Gulf and Central Asia), with this expertise being acquired from within the perspective and context of these regions. This thorough knowledge is essential in order to contextualize the EU's foreign policy and avoid the EU's policy being evaluated only or mainly on the basis of EU or Western paradigms. Expertise on the various regions can also provide the touchstones needed to evaluate the effectiveness, the impact and particularly the relevance of the EU's foreign policy. This already points to the importance of area studies and area specialists for the analysis and development of EU foreign policy, which will be discussed further in this chapter.

A geographical 'outside-in' perspective requires a thorough understanding of a wide range of both material and immaterial features of the third country or region. The material features can be detected through basic facts with regard to the geographical situation *sensu stricto* (surface area, nature of the terrain, borders, etc.), the economic situation and the societal composition of a country or region (with regard to ethnicity, religion, etc.), the human development situation (basic facts on demography, health, education, literacy rate, gender, violence, etc.), the basic infrastructure and communication networks (roads, electricity, Internet access, etc.), the public sector (the public administration, the judicial sector, public finance, etc.), in addition to the basic facts on the political system, external trade, defence, and security and foreign policy of the country or region concerned.[10] An example demonstrates the relevance of basic facts to evaluate the EU's foreign policy: When evaluating the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations as part of its Sahel Strategy – EUCAP Sahel in Niger, EUTM Mali and EUBAM Libya[11] – it is important to keep in mind the sheer surface area, the desert nature of parts of the countries and the length of their borders, as well as of the implications of these facts for the EU's efforts to strengthen the capacity of the security forces in these countries to control their territory and borders.

The immaterial features of a country or region are much more difficult to pin down but are at least as important, as they touch upon the historical, cultural, societal, linguistic, ideational or normative contexts of a country or region.[12] An explanation for, as well as examples of some of these immaterial contexts, are provided in the following sections.

10 See CIA 2013. *The World Factbook*; UNDP 2013. *Human Development Reports*; UNSTATS 2013. *United Nations Statistics Division*; and World Bank 2013. *Data*.

11 See also Chapter 3 by Alexander Mattelaer in this volume.

12 Goodin, R.E. and Tilly, C. (eds) 2006. *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Polity 'Outside-in'[13]

Related to the ethnocentric biases of IR and of the Westphalian paradigm described by Inayatullah and Blaney, one can observe in many publications on EU foreign policy a one-sided focus on the nation state, often considered as the main level of analysis or point of reference.[14] Western foreign policy analysts as well as Western/European foreign policy actors are mainly interested in structures on the national, regional, international and global levels (with the regional and global level considered as consisting predominantly of state actors), but rarely pay attention to polities or structures on various societal levels which do not fit within Western or 'modern' conceptualizations. However, there are other structures through which groups of people are connected in a persistent way, on the basis of ethnicity or religion[15] or on the basis of kinship or other systems of legitimacy to organize large or smaller groups of people (such as kingdoms, chiefdoms, tribes, clans, neighbourhoods or extended families). In terms of effectiveness, legitimacy and identity, these polities can be complementary or superior to those at the state level.[16] Adopting a polity 'outside-in' approach, and thus including such other polities in our analysis, allows us to overcome the 'territorial trap' in the analysis of foreign policy, being the geographical assumption of IR theory and the particular concept of space that dominated the development of the West and of Western academic thinking.[17] As Agnew explains, this territorial trap includes the misconception of the 'historical relationship between territorial states and the broader social and economic structures and geopolitical order (or form of spatial practice) in which these states must operate'.[18]

When looking at the EU's broader neighbourhood and the analysis provided in various other chapters in this book, the relevance of a polity 'outside-in' perspective and of overcoming the 'territorial trap' becomes very clear. The various tribes in Northern Africa, the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa are polities that, for the population in these regions, are often more important in terms of identity, legitimacy and often also effectiveness in providing public services than the formal state structures that are the EU's main point of reference. The same holds for Islam in its various forms and expressions, with the Quran and the Sharia being the main point of reference for the population at large and for a wide

13 I am grateful to Charles Thépaut for the suggestion of this term.

14 Inayatullah, N. and Blaney, D.L. 2004. *International Relations and the Problem of Difference*. London: Routledge.

15 Waever, O. 1993. Societal security: the concept, in Waever, O. et al. (eds), *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*. London: Pinter Publishers, 23.

16 Migdal, J.S. 1998. *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; and Migdal, J.S. 2001. *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

17 Agnew, J. 1994. The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory. *Review of International Political Economy*, 1(1), 53–80.

18 Ibid., 77.

variety of groups, movements and currents.[19] This is true not only in the Middle East and Africa, but also in Central Asia and parts of the Caspian Sea region. The pertinence of these different types of polities and societal structures points to the importance of area specialists who also know and understand the various ethnic- and religion-based groups and movements.

Normative 'Outside-in'

Partially related to the polity 'outside-in' perspective is the normative 'outside-in' perspective. This points to the importance of analysing other regions – and the EU's policies towards these regions – not only on the basis of the EU's or the West's value system, but also on the basis of norms that may be equally or even more important for people in those regions. EU foreign policy as well as its analysis are strongly biased towards values that are predominant in the EU's discourse and that are also mirrored in the conceptualization of the EU as a 'normative power',[20] including democracy, human rights, rule of law or gender equality. And this is often mirrored in the absence of any sensibility for and knowledge and understanding of values that are less important in the West.

Examples of values that are important in the EU's immediate neighbourhood – for instance in the ENP – and in its broader neighbourhood and that also inspire a very wide range of political and social movements are the various values related to the Islamic belief system, with the most important and prevalent value being the belief in and submission to Allah as the omnipotent, merciful and unique.[21] Another example is the important value of allegiance to, responsibility for and solidarity with (the members of) the own group or polity – although this may lead to practices which in the West are labelled as discrimination, nepotism or corruption.[22] A third example is a value which also appears in the European discourse, but receives much less attention in the foreign policy of the EU: 'justice'. The importance of this value is mirrored in the various prominent political parties from the Islamist spectrum in countries in the EU's southern neighbourhood which carry 'justice' in their name. A normative 'outside-in' approach implies that the EU foreign policy analyst or practitioner acquires a sound knowledge of and sensibility to the importance of these and other values in countries and regions in the EU's broader neighbourhood.

19 See Rubin, B. (ed.) 2013. *Islamic Political and Social Movements*. London: Routledge.

20 Manners, I. 2002. Normative Power Europe: a contradiction in terms? *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 40(2), 235–58; and Whitman, R. (ed.) 2011. *Normative Power Europe: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

21 See Rubin, op. cit.

22 See Blundo, G. and de Sardan, J.-P.O. 2006. *Everyday Corruption and the State: Citizens and Public Officials in Africa*. London: Zed Books; and de Sardan, J.-P.O. 1996. L'économie morale de la corruption en Afrique. *Politique africaine*, 63, 97–116.

Linguistic 'Outside-in'

The dominance of English as the *lingua franca* of IR and as the main language in the analysis of EU foreign policy has substantial consequences for the analysis of the EU's policy. It reinforces both the marginalization of and the indifference to the 'outside'. A very limited number of EU foreign policy scholars are able to read primary and secondary sources or to talk to and conduct interviews in Arabic (in its various forms), Farsi, Turkmen, Kazakh, or the many African languages. Moreover, Arab, Persian, African and Asian scholars are only to a limited extent present in the academic publications read by EU foreign policy specialists.

An additional reason why the 'foreign' is missing in foreign policy analysis is that information, concepts, approaches and concerns that are foreign to the scholars' conceptual lenses and cognitive world are often lacking in the analysis, even though they may be key to understanding the outcome and effect of the EU's foreign policy. This leads to the need for a linguistic 'outside-in' approach: the need to read, understand and use more sources written in non-European languages and to work together with local specialists or at least scholars with a sound knowledge of the local language. It also requires a linguistic openness for words or concepts that are perhaps not important in (and can sometimes not easily be translated into) European languages, as well as a sensibility to the impact of language on the way people and societies think. The above mentioned 'problem of difference' is indeed also related to the problem of 'conceptual difference': words used in various languages and regions can in fact have quite different meanings and connotations, while words and concepts that are part of the discourse in some languages may not exist or be less important in other languages.[23]

Disciplinary and Methodological 'Outside-in'

A good understanding of EU foreign policy requires the incorporation of knowledge and analytical frameworks from other academic disciplines. Firstly, as indicated before, a geographical 'outside-in' perspective requires input from specialized 'area studies' (Middle East Studies, Central Asian Studies, etc.), including expertise not only from Western experts but also from experts from those regions. The EU has a comparative disadvantage vis-à-vis the US, Russia or China in this respect: 'area studies' are much less developed in the university system of most European countries (with the exception of the UK), which also implies that the number of area specialists emerging from European universities is rather limited. Therefore, it would be in the interests of the EU to actively promote and subsidize not only 'European studies' in other parts of the world (as it does),

23 See Chabal, P. and Daloz, J.-P. 2006. *Culture Troubles: Politics and the Interpretation of Meaning*. London: Hurst & Company; and Laïdi, Z. 1998. *A World without Meaning: The Crisis of Meaning in International Relations*. Abingdon: Routledge.

but also 'Caucasus studies', 'Middle Eastern studies', 'Persian/Iranian studies' and other area studies at European universities and research centres.

Secondly, in view of the multidimensional nature of most foreign policy challenges, there is a need to rely more systematically on the analysis provided by other disciplines such as security studies, international political economy, democracy studies, development studies, anthropology or philosophy. In addition, the systematic integration of insights from the study of complex policy issues (such as corruption, democracy promotion, or Security Sector Reform) can provide the sophisticated knowledge that is needed to examine related dimensions of EU foreign policy. The analyst can borrow from methodological approaches and research techniques that are used in other disciplines in order to overcome what Hudson described as the 'deep and growing methodological discontent' in foreign policy analysis, with many scholars continuing to use 'inappropriate methods, by employing simplifying assumptions that evade the complexity with which the methods cannot cope'.[24] A major obstacle in this regard is related to data collection and data analysis. Adopting an 'outside-in' perspective implies that the analysis cannot just be based on primary and secondary Western literature and data, but that data also have to be obtained in the target country, region or society itself. However, research and fieldwork in many of the countries of the EU's broader neighbourhood involves specific methodological but also linguistic, financial and other practical challenges.

Thirdly, as indicated before, insights from non-Western scholars are essential for a serious assessment of EU foreign policy. On a more theoretical level, although there might not yet be a 'non-Western IR theory'[25] as such, scholars from the Arab world, Africa and Asia bring to the fore concepts, approaches and issues that are important for understanding non-Western regions, countries and societies. These are thus also relevant for studying the EU's foreign policy towards these regions, countries and societies and for bringing 'difference' and the 'outside' into EU foreign policy analysis.[26]

Lessons for EU Diplomacy

Adopting an 'outside-in' approach has implications for the EU's foreign policy architecture: for the High Representative, the EEAS, the EU Delegations and CSDP missions/operations in third countries, the various Directorates-General (DGs) within the Commission with relevance to the EU's foreign policy (such

24 Hudson, V.M. 2007. *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 188.

25 Acharya, A. and Buzan, B. 2010. *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and beyond Asia*. London: Routledge.

26 Tickner, A.B. and Blaney, D.L. (eds). 2012. *Thinking International Relations Differently*. Abingdon: Routledge; and Tickner and Waever, op. cit.

as DG DevCo or DG Trade), the Council of Ministers and the European Council (and the various relevant committees), the European Parliament (and its relevant committees and inter-parliamentary delegations) and the EU's Member States.[27]

Challenges for the EU's Diplomatic System

Various questions can be raised as to whether the EU's foreign policy framework is sufficiently equipped and adapted to think and act outside the (European) box – in terms of expertise, mandate and capacity to feed the EU's foreign policy system with an 'outside-in' perspective.[28] A first question is whether the EU's diplomatic system can rely on sufficient expertise and in-depth knowledge about other countries and societies. The EU not only needs excellent generalists or people with outstanding diplomatic skills, but also country or area specialists with a sound knowledge of and experience in third countries and with a solid network of contacts in these countries. The various relevant EU actors should be able to rely not only on diplomats or civil servants specialized in, for instance, the EU's policy towards the Caucasus or the Arab world, but also on specialists in the Caucasus and the Arab world itself, with an in-depth knowledge of these regions, their history, societies, value systems, dynamics and complexities.

A second question is to what extent the EEAS, EU Delegations, CSDP missions and relevant DGs have sufficient staff who are fluent in the local languages, as a prerequisite for real interaction and dialogue. An inquiry in various EU Delegations learns that this is often not the case.[29] EU diplomats in EU Delegations often depend to a large extent on local staff for following the debates in a country, for translating documents and interpreting conversations with local actors. This dependency on local staff raises particular challenges in various non-democratic countries where the EU Delegation has to rely on local personnel that is selected and proposed by the government of the guest country.

A third question is whether diplomats and civil servants are able in their daily work to invest sufficient time and energy in the interaction and dialogue with actors in third countries – not only with the elites but also with other segments of societies, including those that do not fit well within the EU's value system and conceptualization of 'civil society' (such as religious movements and parties, which are important in the EU's broader neighbourhood). To what extent have the staff members in the EEAS and in the EU Delegations (including the Heads of Delegation) sufficient time for outreach, in view of their considerable management tasks, of their administrative and budgetary responsibilities, and of the time and

27 Keukeleire, S. and Delreux, T. 2014. *The Foreign Policy of the European Union*. 2nd edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 61–93.

28 Keukeleire, S. 2013. European Foreign Policy beyond Lisbon. The Quest for Relevance, in Govaere, I. and Hanf, D. (eds), *Liber Amicorum – Paul Demaret*. Brussels: P.I.E Peter Lang, 829–39.

29 Author's interviews.

energy needed to interact with the many EU actors involved in foreign policy-making? This is particularly problematic in EU Delegations, as the number of EEAS staff in these Delegations responsible for foreign policy and diplomacy is in general only a fraction of the number of people in these Delegations that is working for DG DevCo or DG Trade.

These questions and critical remarks are often dismissed by EU diplomats. The EU's diplomatic system can indeed also rely on a pool of outstanding diplomats and experts, with a sometimes long experience in third countries and a strong sensibility for the 'outside-in' perspectives. The EU also increasingly tries to attract country/region specialists for the EEAS and EU Delegations, which in turn raises the question whether these experts also dispose of sufficient diplomatic skills and experience. However, the challenge of adopting an 'outside-in' perspective becomes evident when inquiring into the number of staff (in the EEAS in Brussels and in the EU Delegations in non-Western countries) who are fluent in the local language(s), have a thorough understanding of the country and society (and not only of the relations between that country or region with the EU), and who also have sufficient time and mandate to interact with broader sections of society. The limited attention to the 'outside' perspectives also appears in the preparation and training of EU diplomats and civil servants that are sent to EU Delegations in third countries.[30] Most attention is dedicated to the internal functioning of the EU and to the bureaucratic procedures. However, with some exceptions, EU staff neither receive serious language training nor serious preparation regarding the specificities of the third country or region before being sent on mission. Taking into account the 'outside' perspectives is also hampered by the EU's general staff policy which prescribes a regular rotation of EU staff from one position to another (and thus also from one EU Delegation to another, or from an EU Delegation to an unrelated country/area desk in the Brussels offices, or vice versa). This explains why for EU staff it is not always worth investing too much time and energy in delving into the specific context and peculiarities of the country or region in which they reside or for which they are responsible in the EEAS or in the Commission.

The fourth question is whether the EU's policy-making system allows EU diplomats and civil servants to transcend the traditional conception of European interest by incorporating the interests of other states and societies within the EU's own definition of interests. This requires that Ministers and national diplomats within the Council of Ministers, COREPER, the Political and Security Committee (PSC), and the various working groups also accept that complementing an 'EU perspective' with a 'third country perspective' is essential to increase the external relevance and effectiveness of EU foreign policy. This also underlines the daunting challenge of promoting an 'outside-in' perspective in an EU of 28 Member States.

30 Davis Cross, M. 2011. Building a European Diplomacy: Recruitment & Training to the EEAS. *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 16(4), 447–64; and Mahncke, D. and Gstöhl, S. 2012. Training European Diplomats, in Mahncke, D. and Gstöhl, S. (eds), *European Union Diplomacy: Coherence, Unity and Effectiveness*. Brussels: P.I.E Peter Lang, 241–70.

It indeed implies that, in addition to the interests of the EU in general, the interests of the 28 Member States and of the EU institutions as well as those of the third country and society are to be taken seriously.

Lessons for EU Foreign Policy-Making

The preceding observations lead to a number of recommendations with regard to the staff policy in the EU's diplomatic system. First, in terms of recruitment, the EU should try to attract more country/area specialists to the EEAS and other relevant actors in the EU's external relations. Second, the EU should systematically organize training programmes for its civil servants and diplomats to assure that they have a sufficient knowledge of the regions, countries and societies where they will work or which are the subject of their work in Brussels. Within these training programmes, the unavoidable EU focus (related to the objectives of EU foreign policy, the functioning of the EU's diplomatic and institutional system, etc.) has to be complemented with an explicit 'outside-in' approach to make sure that the EU diplomats and civil servants are able to look outside the (European and Western) box. This can also require the development of systematic cooperation with external experts or research institutes specialized in these regions. Third, and related to the previous point, following the example of major diplomatic services such as in the US, Russia and China, the EU should organize intensive language training for its diplomats. Fourth, the EU should – at least for the civil servants and diplomats involved in the EU's diplomacy and external action – adapt its human resources policy in such a way as to foster and accumulate expertise on third countries and regions. This implies replacing its long-standing system where EU staff are regularly transferred to other posts with a system where they can work for a longer term on (or in) a specific region (such as Central Asia or the Arab world).

Another set of recommendations is related to the functioning of EU diplomacy and EU foreign policy-making. First, diplomats and civil servants should receive the explicit instructions to systematically complement (in their political analyses, reports, briefings and drafts for declarations and decisions) the now predominantly EU-centred perspective with an 'outside-in' perspective, and to explain why and how this is relevant for the EU's foreign policy. This goes against the current practice where documents and briefings are very much adapted to the EU's discourse and where, in the worst case, reports and other documents written by EU staff in EU Delegations or CSDP missions are even rewritten in the EEAS or the relevant Commission DGs in Brussels in order to better fit the EU's points of view, priorities, language, and political and institutional sensibilities. Second, emphasizing more the 'outside-in' perspective requires that EU diplomats and civil servants be able to spend more time and energy than is now the case not only for 'outreach' (contacting other actors and explaining and defending the EU's positions and interests), but also for 'inreach' (gaining insights in the contexts, positions and interests in the third country or region and incorporating these in the EU's foreign policy-making system). Third, in the preparatory documents for the

policy-making processes in which Member State representatives are involved (on the level of the working parties, COREPER, the PSC, the Council of Ministers or European Council), the 'outside-in' perspective is to be systematically presented, in order to avoid that the various EU actors mainly focus on internal dynamics and neglect the external relevance, legitimacy and effectiveness of the EU's foreign policy. Adopting an 'outside-in' perspective is indeed not inspired by a merely altruistic wish to take into account the views and context of the 'other', but is to be seen as a way to strengthen the EU in its interactions with other actors in the world.

It is obvious that the realization of some of the recommendations would require additional financial and other resources for the EEAS and the EU Delegations. However, this goes against the practice of the previous years where Member States were reluctant to increase the resources of the EU's diplomatic system – even when creating the EEAS, which had to be a budget-neutral operation.[31] Moreover, adopting these measures would also reinforce EU foreign policy and EU diplomacy, which may precisely be what several Member States and particularly the larger Member States want to avoid.

Conclusions

The main argument of this chapter is that the usually predominant EU-centred perspective in the foreign policy of the EU and in the analysis of EU foreign policy has to be complemented by an 'outside-in' perspective. Such an 'outside-in' perspective implies that the analyst or practitioner takes not only the EU and its policy towards a third country or region as the main point of reference, but also tries to look at this EU policy from the perspective of the third country or region. The chapter proposed several analytical building blocks for constructing an 'outside-in' perspective and for overcoming Western ethnocentrism and recognizing 'difference'. The chapter makes a distinction between a geographical 'outside-in' perspective, a polity 'outside-in' perspective, a normative 'outside-in' perspective, a linguistic 'outside-in' perspective, and a disciplinary and methodological 'outside-in' perspective.

Within the context of the EU's policy towards the neighbours of its neighbours, a geographical 'outside-in' perspective implies a thorough knowledge of the various regions in the EU's broader neighbourhood, with expertise on the various regions being acquired within the perspective and context of these regions. The polity 'outside-in' perspective refers to the need to take into account the various tribes and ethnic- or religion-based groups and movements which are in terms of identity, legitimacy and effectiveness often important in the Gulf, Northern Africa and the Horn of Africa in particular. This is closely related to the normative

31 See Council of the European Union 2010. *Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service (2010/427/EU)*, OJ L 201/30, 3 August, preamble 15.

'outside-in' perspective, which points to the importance of analysing the various regions in the EU's neighbours of the neighbours not only on the basis of the EU's value system, but also on the basis of values that are important for the diverse societies in these regions. Alternative value systems are often reflected in a different discourse in the regions concerned, which also is one aspect of the linguistic 'outside-in' perspective. Constructing an 'outside-in' perspective also requires a disciplinary and methodological 'outside-in' perspective. This implies the incorporation of knowledge and analytical frameworks from specialized 'area studies' (such as Middle East Studies or Central Asian Studies) and from other academic disciplines that can lead the analysis of the EU's policy towards its broader neighbourhood to a higher level of sophistication.

The last section of the chapter distinguishes various factors that hamper the capacity of the EU's institutional and bureaucratic framework to feed the EU's foreign policy system with an 'outside-in' perspective and to think and act 'outside the (European) box'. This provides the basis for the formulation of a number of recommendations for EU diplomacy, both for the EU's staff policy and for the daily practice of EU diplomacy and EU foreign policy-making. Taken together, they may contribute to strengthening the relevance and effectiveness of the EU's foreign policy towards the neighbours of its neighbours.

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